

YOUTH AND SEXUALITY

All cultures are affected by the sexual revolution. Sex is literally everywhere. A visit to the store to buy milk and you can't help but pass magazine racks that display sex in one way or another. Hollywood stars, female and male, are popular --- the sexier they are. Youth, like all human beings, are sexual persons. As human beings we need to relate to our sexuality. All situations begin with why, not what or how. (Simon Sinek. *Start with why?* Listen to his Ted Talk.) Why are human beings sexual beings? We, as human beings are relational, we need each other. We are sexual beings to make us aware of other human beings. Human sexuality is not instinct or an uncontrollable sexual drive, sexuality draws us into human relationships. What distinguishes us from animals is that we can reflect and think about the meaning of sexuality. We can begin with why? Young people are not taught enough about what is involved in a relationship. It is only when young women and young men learn how to get along with another human being, of both sexes, female and male, that one's sexuality can be understood. We are born as sexual beings. Sex is part of our DNA! There would be no future to humanity and the planet if we were not sexual persons. Future generations will exist because women and men can procreate other human beings. However, it is most important to remember that sex is not something a person does, it is who a person is. And a person is a responsible person when they become responsible for themselves, including their sexuality and their sexual activity. Irresponsible young women and young men do not see the consequences of having sex. Sex can lead to sexually transmitted diseases (STD), HIV Aids, and pregnancy and sometimes abortions. Do young women and young men know why sexual activity is to be avoided until marriage? I would dare say they do not. Why? Because they are being led by many in our present culture and the media that sex is just an activity like another other activity. I repeat what I have already said. Sex is not something you do, it is who you are. It is a question of respect. Respect your friendships. Respect the young women or the young man to whom you may be attracted sexually. Respect yourself. Respect your sexuality. It is not true that if two people agree to have sex, and no one gets hurt, it is okay. That is simply not true. Everything human beings do, because they can think, has consequences. Young women and young men have to learn to be responsible. To be responsible sexually is to respect your friend and to never disrespect the wishes of your friend. When a young woman or a young man say no, IT IS NO! If a woman's wish is not respected, it is rape and it is a criminal offense. Rape leads to a law suit and prison time. The effect of a rape on the life of a young woman is life-long, very sadly it marks her entire life. The warrior spirit that some young men develop makes women a conquest and a commodity to be used for their pleasure. That's not sex, it is male dominance! Women are not to consider themselves inferior to men. All relationships between the sexes must be relationships of equality. Women are equal to men.

The facts are frightening. Many young people, as young as 10 years old, experiment with sex. Young people are not being told the truth when they are told that sex is natural and simply an expression of affection. Yes, sex is natural, part of our nature, but it is to express, in a very intimate way, love for a person. Sex in itself is not love, love controls sexual urges and sexual

activity. Control is why we are human beings. Control distinguishes us from others in the animal kingdom, where there is no control of sexual expression, there is a mating season and it is instinct.

How many young women or young men who are reading this article believe that we are to wait until marriage for sex? From my experience, not many. When total abstinence from sex before marriage is mentioned, almost all young people will laugh at you. Why abstinence? To save the most intimate act and expression of love for the **one** person to whom you commit yourself for life. A virgin is not only a person who has not had sex, a virgin on her or his wedding day has a “virginal” future, a future that is new and exciting together. It is like the skier who stands at the top of the mountain and looks down the mountain at the virginal snow, no prior ski tracks, something special for me.

Father John Walsh

A footnote: If a young women or a young man loses her or his physical virginity, remember each person can regain their spiritual virginity when they go to confession and have their sins forgiven.